

HIDDEN AGENDA

The Influence of Religious Extremism on The Politics of Cobb County, Georgia

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This report has been prepared by the Neighbors Network, a legal non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Georgia. The Neighbors Network opposes hate crime and hate group activity through research, education, victims assistance, and community action.

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INTRODUCTION

In the months since the release of the Neighbors Network's previous report, THE SHADOW OF HATE: Hate Group Activity In Cobb County, Georgia, public debate surrounding the Cobb County Commission's controversial anti-lesbian and anti-gay Resolution has intensified. The conclusion of that report, that the Commission's action encouraged the activities of hate groups based in that county by pandering to the politics of bigotry and intolerance, has provoked a variety of responses. Notable among these were the statements of Bill Byrne, Chairman of the County Commission.

In an interview with the Atlanta Jewish Times, Chairman Byrne acknowledged the factual accuracy of that report, but he denied its conclusions. Byrne went on to state his belief that hate groups based in Cobb County had no influence on the Commission or its decisions. Research conducted by Neighbors Network indicates that this is not the case.

As this report seeks to document, an extremist religious faction within the Conservative Christian Movement has been both active and influential in this dispute since the Resolution's inception. This faction, known as the **Christian Reconstruction Movement (CRM)**, advocates the death penalty for such "crimes" as homosexuality and adultery, the suppression of the constitutional liberties of non-Christians, and the abolition of secular government in favor of a "Christian Theocratic Republic." It is apparent that the CRM has used the Cobb dispute to build its political influence. The CRM has developed ties with a number of local politicians including at least one member of the Cobb County Commission.

Since the passage of the resolution, CRM leaders have emerged as the most active and vocal supporters of the Commission's action. They have organized and participated in public demonstrations to counter critics of the resolution. They have used public forums ranging from Commission meetings to the commentary pages and letters columns of local newspapers to establish themselves as the leading spokespersons for supporters of the Resolution. They have accomplished this while concealing the radical and extremist character of their broader agenda. It is the purpose of this report to expose these facts to public scrutiny and insure a clear understanding of the issues at stake in the current dispute.

CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION: BLUEPRINT FOR THEOCRACY

The following is a short overview of the principles and goals of the **Christian Reconstruction Movement (CRM)**. The material for this summary has been drawn from independent research by Neighbors Network and other researchers, particularly the work of Fred Clarkson whose analysis of the

CRM recently appeared in The Public Eye, a quarterly publication of the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Political Research Associates. Other sources include The Freedom Writer, a publication of the Institute for the First Amendment based in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

The CRM belief system is derived from an extreme brand of orthodox Calvinism. Reduced to its theological essentials, the CRM holds that all of history is divinely pre-destined and that CRM adherents are mandated by God to replace current government with a "**Christian Theocratic Republic.**" Under this system all areas of life would be regulated according to Christian Reconstructionist conceptions of Biblical law.

The depth of the CRM's antagonism to traditional American civil and religious liberty can be judged from the following statement by its founding Theoretician, **Rousas John Rushdoony**. In his seminal 1973 statement of Reconstructionist principals, Institutes of Biblical Law, Rushdoony wrote: "The only true order is founded on Biblical Law. All law is religious in nature, and every non-biblical law-order represents an anti-Christian religion." Rushdoony further asserted that "Every law-order is a state of war against the enemies of that order, and all law is a form of warfare."¹

Put simply, Rushdoony denies that any system of laws or government can remain neutral on matters of religion. This is a fundamental premise of the CRM. Viewed from a Reconstructionist perspective, government either actively promotes "Christianity" (i.e. CRM), or it is actively anti-Christian.

Reconstructionists believe that they are engaged in biblical warfare with such anti-Christian or "secular" forces. In this "war" their goal is absolute victory. For the CRM the only legitimate form of government is one that views God as holding absolute "dominion" as "ruler of nations." (For this reason Reconstructionism is sometimes described as "Dominion Theology.")

Such a government would enforce application of Old Testament Law to all aspects of contemporary life. All people would be subject to that enforcement irrespective of their personal religious convictions. Or as Texas Reconstructionist and State Republican Party officer Dr. Stephen Hotze recently stated in reference to Judaism, Islam, and other faiths, "We give them freedom to practice their religion, but we don't believe their religion is equal, it can't be."²

According to Rushdoony, the application of these laws would be brutally literal: "God's Government prevails, and his alternatives are clear-cut: either men and nations obey his laws, or God invokes the death penalty against them."³

It is this application of "Gods Laws" to civil society that is the touchstone of CRM activism. Local CRM leader **Gary DeMar** has gone so far as to describe it as the "essence of Christian Reconstruction."⁴ In a more rhetorical style, local Reconstructionist minister Joseph Morecraft has said that the purpose of civil government is to "terrorize evil doers . . . to be an avenger!"⁵

This stance is directly contrary to Article VI of the United States Constitution, which prohibits religious testing for public office. This is a major difficulty for a movement that claims to promote traditional values. According to researcher Fred Clarkson, Rushdoony argues that the Framers intended Article VI to safeguard the church and states' rights from government interference, not to preclude religious tyranny. This position has been echoed throughout the religious right.

More alarming still, is the position of **Gary North**, Rushdoony's son-in-law and a influential CRM leader in his own right. North admits the Constitution prohibits theocratic rule and has criticized Rushdoony's position. Says North, "In his desire to make a case for a Christian America, [Rushdoony] closed his eyes to the judicial break from Christian America: the ratification of the constitution."⁶

This view is a radical departure from traditional conservatism. As Clarkson writes, "[W]hile claiming to be reformers, not revolutionaries, Reconstructionists recognize that the harsh theocracy they advocate is revolutionary indeed." Clarkson goes on to cite North's warning against a "premature revolutionary situation." North asserts that the public must begin to accept "the judicially binding case laws of the Old Testament before we attempt to tear down judicial institutions that still rely on natural law or public virtue. (I have in mind the U.S. Constitution)."⁷

What would the practical effects of the CRM's success be? According to Clarkson, it would spell disaster for traditional American values of political and religious liberty.

"Reconstructionism would not only eliminate democracy but many of its manifestations, such as labor unions, civil rights laws, and public schools. Women would be generally relegated to hearth and home. Insufficiently Christian men would be denied citizenship, perhaps executed."

In their zeal to impose Old Testament style "biblical law," Clarkson states that the CRM would "[E]xtend capital punishment . . . to include, among other things, blasphemy, heresy, adultery, and homosexuality. "The manner in which this penalty is applied would be likewise "biblical." Approved methods would include hanging, burning, and stoning.

Despite the extremism of such views, the CRM has begun to play a significant leadership role within the religious right. Major figures such as televangelist **D. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Ministries** in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and **Operation Rescue founder Randal Terry** are identified with the CRM. Reconstructionists have been influential in such national organizations as the **Coalition for Revival** and, locally, with **Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition**.

THE COBB COUNTY CONNECTION

Cobb County, Georgia, is a major center of CRM activity. It is the location of a national CRM publishing house, American Vision, based in Marietta and operated by Gary DeMar. DeMar is the author of several CRM texts and publishes Biblical Worldview Magazine and the AV Report, edited by **Ralph Barker**. Also residing in Cobb is **Rev. Joseph Morecraft**, a major leader of the CRM, who pastors the **Chalcedon Presbyterian Church** in Dunwoody and publishes the Counsel of Chalcedon, a leading Reconstructionist magazine.

While Joseph Morecraft has greater stature as a minister within the CRM, it is Gary Demar and Ralph Barker who have taken public leadership in the dispute over the Cobb County Resolution. As early as the summer of 1993, DeMar appeared at Cobb Commission meetings to speak out in favor of the resolution. DeMar was a major organizer and speaker at the Prayer and Praise rally held in support of the resolution in August 1993. In a speech at that gathering, DeMar asserted that if gays and lesbians continued to push for social acceptance "[p]arents would not be able to complain if a friend molested their child or recruited them for anal sodomy."

Following the passage of the anti-gay and lesbian resolution, DeMar again emerged as spokesperson for a so-called "buycott" effort, aimed at countering a boycott by opponents of the resolution. **Pat Gartland**, head of the **Christian Coalition of Georgia**, GOP Congressional Candidate **Bob Barr** and **Jack Thrift**, former **Chairman of the Georgia Pat Buchanan Campaign Committee** attended a press conference held at Marietta square to announce this initiative. This effort was promoted in the AV Report for December 1993, under the headline "Cobb County Buycott \$ucceeding!" This article noted that Conservative Christian publications such as Family News In Focus, Citizen Magazine, and the American Family Journal had contacted American Vision for updates on this story.

THE INNER CIRCLE

DeMar and Barker continued to promote the controversy in their publications during early 1994. The January, February, and March issues of

Biblical Worldview magazine carried full page advertisements for American Vision's 1994 "Inner Circle" banquet which listed **Cobb County Commissioner Gordon Wysong** as a featured speaker at the event, along with **Dr. Steven Hotze**. The advertisement in the March issue lauded Commissioner Wysong's role in promoting the anti-lesbian and anti-gay resolution and promised prospective attendees that he would "[s]hare some specific strategies for citizens to take action."

The banquet, held on March 19, 1994, at the Cobb County Convention Center, was notable for more than Commissioner Wysong's participation. During the proceedings, Ralph Barker, acting as Master of Ceremonies, introduced a number of politicians that were present, including **Bob Barr**, GOP Gubernatorial hopefuls **Nimrod McNair** and **John Knox**, **State Court Judge Harris Adams** (who Barker said had "worked with us on the Ten Commandments case."), and GOP State Representative primary candidate **Bob Franklin**. Not present, but singled out for honorable mention by Barker, was GOP candidate for Lt. Governor, **Nancy Schaeffer**. Barker described Schaeffer as being "[a] minister to us. She sent us a lot of faxes from the Lobbyist [during the past legislative session]."

The keynote speech was given by Dr. Hotze, who began by praising DeMar and American Vision. "It is the effect of Gary's writing and the work of American Vision and your contribution that has made a real dramatic difference in the realm of civil government in Houston Texas, in Harris County, and the State of Texas."

The theme of Hotze's speech was, "Restoring America's Christian Heritage." Saying, "[t]he only question is whose morality is going to be imposed on whom," he proposed the following strategy to accomplish this goal. "What we need today in America is judges, we need mayors, we need governors, who are willing to stand up to our Supreme Court, to our President, and say 'not in our city.'" Hotze stated, "I am convinced if men of courage in positions of leadership that are lesser magistrates, would stand, they would bring about a significant constitutional crisis." Hotze advised the audience that "We need to get men elected to do that."

In his remarks to the crowd of 158, Wysong launched a wide ranging attack on the "opponents of family values." He claimed that gay rights' advocates were demanding the "[l]owering or elimination of the age of sexual consent. The number mentioned was twelve." Wysong also claimed that gay rights' advocates' promote the development of a national needle exchange program "[s]o they can spread their HIV to the rest of us so that we'll have the same stake in AIDS as they do." Wysong also asserted that "[n]aked children were paraded down the streets under the banner of a group known as NAMBLA, the North American Man-Boy Love Association" during the recent lesbian/gay rights march in Washington, D.C. He further stated that

"[g]ay rights advocates cannot bring themselves to condemn child molestation." He closed his remarks by advising his audience that "[w]e should question their character, their motives and their results. We should blame [homosexuals] for every social failure in America." He received a standing ovation.

Following the speaker's program, Gary DeMar made a special presentation to the audience. Citing William L. Shirer's Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, DeMar told the audience that Adolf Hitler "[p]lotted a strategy to recapture the nation." He added, "Hitler knew where the solution to the problem was in capturing a nation, and that was to capture the youth." Saying that "[m]ost of our children are home-schooled. Some go to Christian schools. A few are in public school. But over 90% of American children are in public schools and they are not getting the kind of education we would want them to have. . . We have got to get to the youth of America."

DeMar asked the audience to support the development of a series of history textbooks for children. These textbooks would represent American history from a CRM perspective. DeMar emphasized that these texts would be available to public schools systems. But this would simply be a stop gap. DeMar declared that "I would like to see the abolition of Government education in our society."

Following DeMar's presentation, Ralph Barker openly solicited the audience for funds for the project, saying, "[s]chools are ready for this now, home schools are ready for this now." Barker singled out the political candidates in the audience for solicitation.

Throughout the evening, Barker made mention of the personal relationship that both he and DeMar enjoy with a number of the candidates present, and the "behind the scenes" work in which they were engaged. A public example of Barker's activism can be found in the February 1994 issue of Inside Georgia, a publication of the Christian Coalition of Georgia. In that issue, an article by Barker entitled, "Learning To Think Straight In A Crooked World" shared the front page with articles by Georgia **Senator Paul Coverdell** and **Congressman Mac Collins**.

In that article, Barker advanced the following argument against Government Health Care: "[W]hat do you think would happen if the government decided that Christians should be tortured, harassed or even eliminated through the health care system. It would be easy to do. Of course the official explanation of your death would satisfy any who inquire. It would sound official. It would be the price we all pay to insure health care would be given to all." According to the May 1994 issue of the AV Report, Barker's appeal to the "Inner Circle" netted pledges and donations totaling close to \$20,000.00.

MANIPULATING THE MEDIA

In the months following the banquet, DeMar and Barker pursued a high profile position in the media. In April, guest columns by DeMar appeared on the editorial pages of both The Marietta Daily Journal and The Atlanta Journal/Constitution. In these columns, as in his earlier media statements, DeMar identified himself generically as a Christian with no mention of his affiliation with the CRM. American Vision was likewise described as an organization publishing "Christian educational materials."

On April 20, Barker attended the Press Conference where Cobb Commission Chair Bill Byrne issued a "Proclamation of Welcome." It was at this event that Commissioner Byrne made comments equating gays and lesbians with Nazi skinheads and other hate groups. On May 19, following the release of a statement by thirty-seven clergy opposing the resolution, Barker organized a Picket of the offices of the Marietta Daily Journal criticizing the paper for supposed liberal bias in it's coverage of the ongoing controversy.

On May 26, Barker announced plans for a press conference on June 2, to release a statement by conservative clergy supporting the anti-lesbian and anti-gay resolution. Barker stated that he was drafting such a statement for that purpose. On May 31, a closed meeting was held at the Mount Bethel United Methodist Church in Cobb County to approve a final draft of the statement. Attending the gathering were Rev. Nelson Price of Roswell Street Baptist Church, the Rev. Charles Sineath of First United Methodist of Marietta, and former County Attorney Fred Bentley, Jr.

On June 2, a press conference presenting the Joint Statement was held in downtown Marietta drawing an estimated 200 participants. Among these were Rev. Nelson Price and Gary DeMar. The Rev. Ralph Barker's name appeared among those of the statements signers. On none of these occasions did Ralph Barker identify himself as a member of the CRM.

DIVINE DECEPTION

Given the active public role that DeMar and Barker have assumed in the debate in Cobb County, the question arises as to why they have been so reticent concerning their actual beliefs. As individuals whose livelihood is based on CRM activism, they have every reason, both personally and theologically, to proclaim their views. The answer appears to lie in the severity of those views as well as their unpopularity.

This policy of evasion with the public at large is characteristic of the CRM as a whole. As Fred Clarkson points out "Reconstructionism cloaks its identity, as well as its activities, understanding the degree of opposition it provokes." Or, as Gary North has stated, "[w]e need the noise of contemporary events to hide us from Humanist enemies who, if they understood the long-term threat to their civilization our ideas pose, would be wise to take steps to crush us."⁸

Gary North's views have particular significance since he is co-author with Gary DeMar of the book Christian Reconstruction: What It Is, What It Isn't. This publication, distributed by American Vision, is intended as a defining text of the CRM. It is apparent that DeMar considers North's authority on CRM theology to be equal to his own. In his preface to the above mentioned text, for example, North describes the AIDS epidemic as "AIDS, God's eloquent response to the myth of moral neutrality."⁹ This view corresponds easily with DeMar's statement that under Biblical Law, "Sodomy merits the death penalty"¹⁰.

It should be noted that Sodomy is not limited to homosexual acts. Nor does DeMar limit his belief in the application of biblical death penalties to that activity alone. On January 4, 1991, DeMar spoke on WSB radio's "Sound Off" program, hosted by Paul Gonzales. In response to questioning, DeMar admitted that the death penalty was also mandated for adulterers and those who have, or perform, abortions. According to DeMar, "[i]f capital punishment could be brought on someone who killed a one day old child, then the same punishment would occur with someone who killed a child in the womb."

On the issue of revolutionary action, DeMar takes an equivocal tone. While stating that "[t]here is no theological reason . . . to take up arms at the drop of a hat," he goes on to say that CRM adherents "[c]an afford to wait for God to judge ungodly regimes, bide their time, and prepare to rebuild upon the ruins." But DeMar adds the following qualification: "Still, the Bible teaches that we are at war and must prepare for it."¹¹

It should be noted that DeMar makes no explicit rejection of revolutionary means. He simply states that such means are not necessary at the present time. As for the future, he endorses undefined preparations.

DeMar attempts a similar elusiveness concerning Article VI of the United States Constitution. He has described it as a "mistake" of the framers. In his writings, he emphasizes the explicitly religious character of colonial and pre-constitutional state governments as if they should supersede the subsequent acts of the constitutional convention.

Despite such fine distinctions, the bottom line remains the same as with North and Rushdoony. Current constitutional law regarding separation between Church and State is anti-Christian; therefore, the CRM is at war with it.

The intricacies of the CRM's historical and theological arguments should not be taken lightly. For the believer, they provide ample justification for any action against the supposed enemy. Gary DeMar has written, "God's word is self-authenticating and is the judge of all other supposed authorities, human reason included."¹² This standard opens an unbridgeable gulf between CRM adherents and all who do not share their viewpoint. It is a blunt assertion that CRM positions, whether political or theological, are not subject to any independent test or criticism.

Since Reconstructionists believe that their version of "God's Word" is the sole correct theology, it follows that their actions cannot be challenged on moral, ethical or legal grounds, the facts notwithstanding. By extension, it is impossible for the CRM to be unjust to its opponents, since it has defined them as opponents of "God's Word."

The practical consequences of this mind set are apparent in the deceptive tactics of CRM activists.

WHERE BIGOTRIES MEET

One indication of the CRM's growing influence in Georgia politics is its willingness to initiate infighting within the State GOP. A prime example of this is the candidacy of **Bobby Franklin** for House District 39. This seat is currently held by **conservative Republican Kip Klein**. Neither Klein's Party affiliation or his avowed Christian beliefs have been sufficient to protect him from a primary challenge.

Franklin's connections with the CRM go beyond the endorsement he received at the Inner Circle Banquet. His wife is employed at the **Chalcedon Christian School**, an adjunct of **Rev. Joseph Morecraft's Chalcedon Presbyterian Church**. A number of Chalcedon members appear on Franklin's list of campaign contributors.

The relationship between Franklin's campaign and Morecraft's operation is not a minor consideration. Morecraft's brand of Reconstructionism is no less extreme than that of DeMar. Speaking at a Biblical Worldview and Christian Education conference in 1993, Morecraft emphatically stated that "[n]obody has the right to worship on this planet any God but Jehovah. And therefore the state does not have the responsibility to defend anybody's pseudo-right to worship an idol!"¹³

Morecraft's activities are not limited to such specifically religious areas. He also holds the position of Policy Director on the Board of the **Georgia Leadership Commission**. The stated purpose of this organization is "[T]o enact legislation that reinstates Christian liberties that Americans once held as absolute."¹⁴ The February 1994 issue of The GLC Report, the Commission's newsletter, advocated the death penalty for adultery, abortion, homosexuality, vehicular manslaughter and negligent manslaughter.

Another disturbing aspect of the Franklin Campaign is its links to hate group activity. The registration records of the Committee to Elect Bobby Franklin list **R. Lee Collins** of Marietta as the Committee Chair. Collins is currently President of the **Heritage Preservation Association** under whose aegis he has traveled throughout the southeast to fight alleged attacks on "southern heritage." When the state of Virginia recently debated dropping "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny" as its state song, due to its racially offensive lyrics, Collins visited the state to provide public support to opponents of the change.

Previously, Collins had been Chair of the **Committee to Save Our State Flag**, having taken the post following the resignation of **C. Ray Haralson**, former Chief of the **Georgia Populist Party** and current Secretary Treasurer of **Ed Field's** racist **America First Party** and a regular participant at ku klux klan rallies. (See The Shadow of Hatred, Neighbors Network Publications). Prior to becoming Chairman, Collins had acted as media spokesperson for the Committee. In that capacity, Collins vigorously denied allegations of hate group influence on the Committee only to be contradicted by press reports that revealed a high level of klan and Nazi involvement.

Since that time, Collins has said that he has severed all links with such organizations. However, Collins spoke at a recent rally in Columbia, South Carolina to oppose the removal of the Confederate battle flag sponsored by **Dr. William Carter**. Carter is an organizer for the white separatist **Conservative Citizens Council** and was a participant at the founding conference of the America First Party. Joining Collins on the platform was Marietta Attorney **Sam Dickson**, a white separatist and holocaust revisionist. (See The Shadow of Hatred.)

While attempting to distance himself from such questionable associations, Collins has freely expressed extreme views of his own. In an article in the January 1994 issue of Atlanta Magazine, Collins asserted that opposition to removing the Confederate Battle standard from the Georgia State Flag is "a continuation of the struggle for southern independence politically." He also stated that "I believe that true, pure segregationists were not racist. Segregationists believed in separate but equal, but they truly believed in equal . . . I don't see that as racist." Denying that he is a segregationist, Collins went on to add, "If we let the laws of nature take over,

quit fighting it . . . I believe we will find an equilibrium that just happens to consist of some form of segregation."

These comments reflect a separatist viewpoint that goes beyond lost cause nostalgia. The May 30, 1994 edition of the Atlanta Constitution contained an explicit statement of Collins' position. When asked to comment on why southerners were less likely to fly the American flag on Memorial Day, Collins replied, "that flag represents their country, and not ours. I don't equate flying the (America) flag with being patriotic."

The Bobby Franklin Campaign appears to provide a comfortable home for the political extremes of bigotry and intolerance.

It is not surprising that the bigotry of the CRM would find common ground with more traditional forms of prejudice. Although the CRM does not openly advocate racist doctrines, their political views fit comfortably with those espoused by a large proportion of the white supremacist and white separatist movement. Rushdoony's writings have been used by **Christian Identity** leader **Pete Peters** to justify the killing of homosexuals. Peters' "church" in La Porte, Colorado promotes the white supremacy and virulent anti-Semitism which characterize Christian Identity theology.

The issue of anti-Semitism is another area in which traditional hate mongers find the CRM viewpoint congenial. The CRM takes a theological position, declaring that the Jewish people no longer enjoy a special relationship with God. They argue that the covenant of the Old Testament was dissolved when the Jewish people refused to convert to Christianity. Consequently, the true chosen people are the "true" Christians of today. That is to say, those Christians who adhere to the CRM dogma.

This theological position, as well as the CRM's hostility to the state of Israel and Zionism, has brought the movement substantial criticism from within the Christian community. Evangelical author **Hall Lindsay** has argued in his book, The Road to Holocaust, that the CRM is laying the theological foundations for a new extermination of Jews. Reconstructionists deny being anti-Jewish, while at the same time asserting that all Jews will be converted to Christianity prior to the return of Christ. This is another goal of the their movement.

CONCLUSION

The facts contained in this report indicate that events in Cobb County have a significance beyond questions of local community standards. Although advocates of the resolution have denied that any outside influence motivated its adoption, it is evident that such influence is now a reality. It is

equally apparent that Cobb County has become a staging ground for the CRM in its efforts to establish its leadership of the conservative Christian movement. The suspicion arises that public policy in Cobb County is being held hostage to a radical political agenda.

Clearly, there can be no objection to political activism on the part of any citizen or group of citizens so long as such activity is lawful. Such activity is a constitutionally guaranteed right. This is true irrespective of the character of the views being promoted.

In addition, religious beliefs and opinions will always inform the political choices of citizens who subscribe to them. It is precisely this freedom of individual conscience that the Founders sought to insure through the constitutional separation of church and state. It was presumed that a free society with free and representative institutions would thrive in an atmosphere of open exchange and debate. Such an open society is only possible if Government refrains from passing judgment on religious issues.

It is at this point the pertinent question should be asked. How open has the debate in Cobb County been? Have the citizens of that County been given an honest accounting of the issues?

Based upon the information contained in this report, it appears that the answer to both of these questions is no. The role of the CRM, whose agenda for America would require the repudiation of the U.S. Constitution, has remained entirely hidden from public view. Far from proclaiming their Gospel, the CRM has resorted to a deceptive strategy in which their extremist agenda is hidden behind pseudo-conservative rhetoric.

Concealing their ultimate goals, CRM spokespersons have continuously misrepresented themselves to the public. They have posed as mainstream, albeit conservative, Christians while in actuality being militant proponents of a radical splinter group. Their success in manipulating the debate in Cobb County corresponds directly to their success in manipulating the far larger conservative constituency through these methods.

An example of the effectiveness of this strategy of stealth is to be found in the case of the statement signed by 270 clergy in support of the Commission Resolution. The genesis of this statement was CRM activist **Ralph Barker**. He was quickly joined by such mainstream conservative Christian leaders as **Rev. Nelson Price** and **Rev. Randall Mickler**. Rev. Mickler subsequently described the statement as a consensus document saying, "It won't satisfy the Praise God for AIDS crowd." Such assurances ring hollow in light of the statement's origin and Barker's status as a co-signatory and organizer.

It has been suggested that the involvement of Price and Mickler was intended to pre-empt the CRM, the goal being to forestall a more inflammatory statement expected from Barker. Whatever the reasoning, the practical effect was to place the broader body of Conservative Christians squarely behind a CRM-inspired initiative. This cannot do otherwise than increase the CRM's prestige and perceived legitimacy. At the same time, the involvement of high profile conservative leaders has served to conceal the nature and degree of CRM activity. To this extent, these leaders have been allies, whether willing or unwilling, to an extremist agenda.

No such ambiguity attaches itself to the role of Commissioner Gordon Wysong. His association with DeMar and Barker has extended to aiding their fundraising and promotion of American Vision. Through such actions he has clearly allied himself with their radical goals. This is likewise the case with other politicians who have associated themselves with such efforts.

Given the pervasive pattern of CRM involvement in Cobb County politics, and the character of their goals, it is only reasonable that they and their supporters be held to the same degree of public scrutiny required of any political organization or movement. This is especially true when the political movement or organization espouses a strategy designed to deny and nullify constitutional authority. Elected officials and candidates for office who ally themselves with such inflammatory and provocative actions should be held accountable before the electorate. Such individuals ought to state candidly and publicly whether or not they support the CRM vision for America. If they do not, they should repudiate the CRM agenda.

The role of Cobb County's Conservative Christian leadership is equally subject to criticism. Having taken a position on public policy, they have the same obligation to the citizenry as any other political advocate. Do they support the CRM agenda or do they not? If not, why have they allied themselves with the advocates of the CRM? On the basis of both their activism and their professional calling, they owe the public an honest accounting.

NOTES

¹Clarkson, Fred, "Christian Reconstruction," The Public Eye, Winter-Spring, 1994.

²Speech to American Vision "Inner Circle" Banquet, March 19, 1994.

³Clarkson, Fred, "Christian Reconstruction," The Public Eye, Winter-Spring, 1994.

⁴DeMar, Gary, Christian Reconstruction: What It Is, What It Isn't, p. 83.

⁵Clarkson, Fred.

⁶Clarkson, Fred, "Christian Reconstruction," The Public Eye, Winter-Spring, 1994.

⁷Ibid.

⁸DeMar, Gary, Christian Reconstruction: What It Is, What It Isn't, p. xxi.

⁹Ibid., p. xiv.

¹⁰DeMar, Gary, "Oh Brother!," Biblical Worldview Magazine, May, 1994.

¹¹Demar, Gary, Christian Reconstruction: What It Is, What It Isn't, pp. 141-143.

¹²Ibid., p. 82.

¹³Clarkson, Fred.

¹⁴GLC Report, February, 1994.